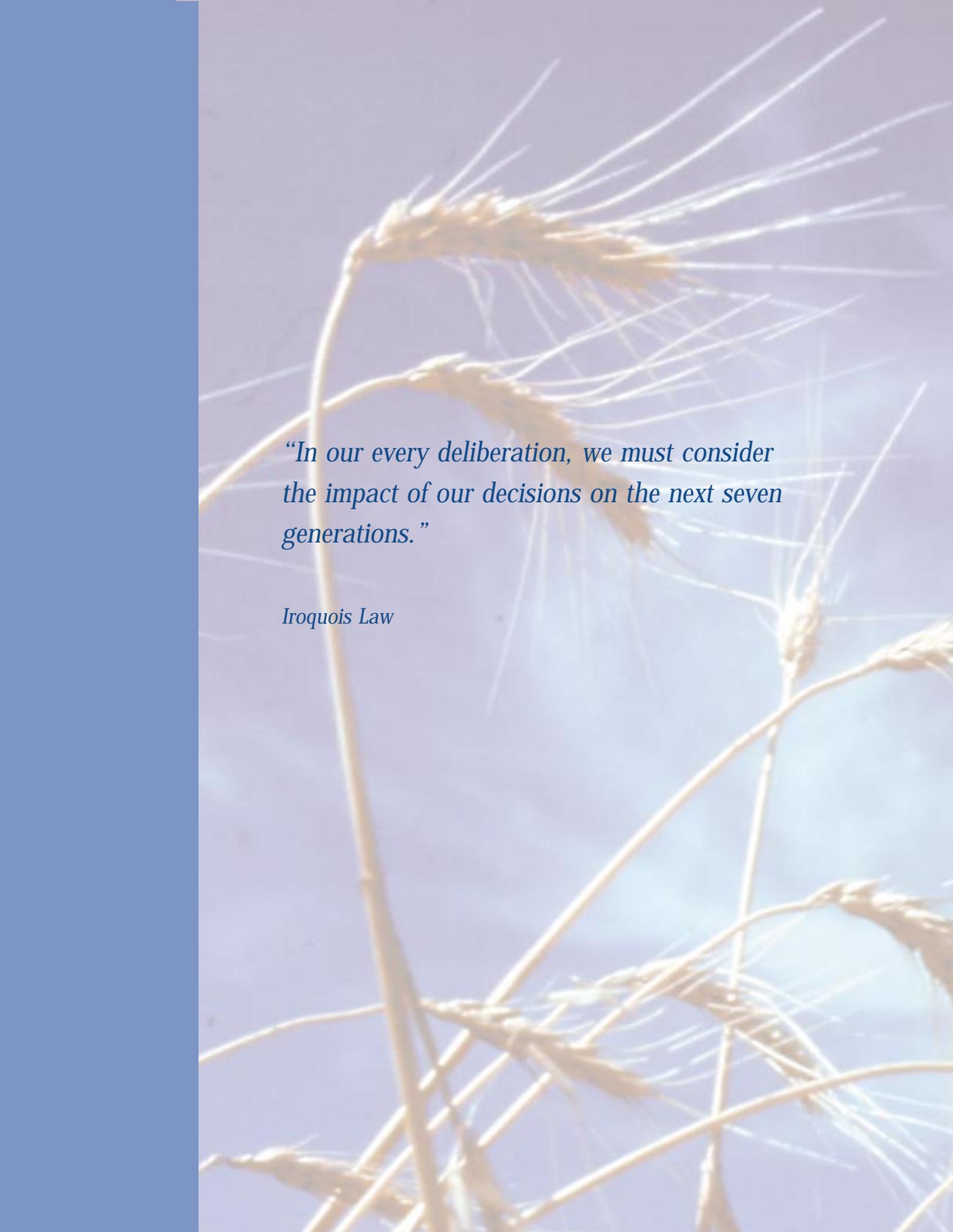


Harvest of Hope

*A Record of Progress at the
United States Department of Agriculture*





*“In our every deliberation, we must consider
the impact of our decisions on the next seven
generations.”*

Iroquois Law

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Cover photos represent some of USDA’s programs (left to right):

- *Building a 21st Century Farm Policy: Midwestern corn field;*
- *Safe Food for America’s Families: Two children enjoy apples;*
- *Protecting Our Natural Resources: Scene from a national forest;*
- *Reviving the Rural American Dream: Rural scene;*
- *Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman;*
- *Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Rich Rominger;*
- *A Less Hungry World: Container ship in port;*
- *Building a Healthy, Open and Fair Farm Economy: Produce at market; and*
- *Exploring New Scientific Frontiers: Research test tubes.*

Background photo: Scene from a national forest.

Foreword

The Iroquois teach us that in our every decision, we must consider the impact not only on ourselves, but also on the next seven generations. As the Clinton Administration winds to a close, I am proud of the many achievements made at USDA. These efforts have touched the lives of all Americans and many people around the world. Without a doubt, our harvest of hope and progress will have a positive impact for many years – indeed, many generations – to come.

This report to the President shares with the American people the major accomplishments of USDA in the year 2000. It also offers us the opportunity to take one last look back over President Clinton's strong record of achievements at USDA – a proud record 8 years in the making.

From establishing a Global Food for Education Initiative to achieving reduced foodborne illnesses due to modernized inspections, to standing by the Nation's farmers and ranchers in difficult times, to taking bold steps to protect America's last pristine forests, to achieving record-high rural homeownership levels, the progress at USDA in the year 2000 is a powerful testament to the work and vision of the Clinton Administration.

When Abraham Lincoln created USDA in 1862, he called us the "people's department." No Administration in modern history has done more to see USDA live up to the full promise of this name than President Clinton's. Working together over the past 8 years, we:

- Embraced the wide diversity of U.S. agriculture today by fighting for a strong, inclusive safety net and vital programs that give farmers resources to do their work more sustainably;
- Escalated America's war on hunger here in America and around the world;
- Empowered Americans with knowledge of the strong ties between nutrition and health;
- Modernized food safety inspections and dramatically reduced foodborne illnesses;
- Brought clean, safe drinking water or improved the drinking water to 3.4 million rural Americans;
- Transformed USDA's civil rights record from lousy to laudable;

- Empowered the poorest rural areas in the country to take control of their economic destiny;
- Forged international trade agreements to expand market opportunities for U.S. producers;
- Took historic steps to protect America's remaining pristine national forests;
- And, trimmed the fat at USDA, producing a leaner Department – with far fewer employees and offices – and a true model for government that "works better and costs less."

I want to thank the many USDA employees, customers, partners, Members of Congress, and other stakeholders for their contributions to the work of USDA in recent years. From agriculture to nutrition, to food safety, to conservation – the work of this Department touches the lives of every American every day. What an opportunity to make a difference for our country and our world.

This is an opportunity that President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, former Secretary Mike Espy, Deputy Secretary Rich Rominger, and countless others seized every day, as we fought to leave as our gift to future generations a strong farm economy, a thriving rural America, a productive natural resource base, a healthy population, and a less hungry world. By tirelessly carrying out the vision of President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the "people's department" made an enduring impact on the quality of life here in America and around the world. Through our work together, we have left the most precious of legacies to future generations. It is a legacy of hope.

Our Record of Progress at USDA

Over the past 8 years, the Clinton Administration worked to harness the opportunities at USDA to use government to make a difference in people's lives by fostering a strong economy across urban and rural America, protecting natural resources for future generations, leading the world war on hunger, and promoting the public health through food safety and nutrition efforts. The Administration also took a strong stand for America's family farmers and ranchers, embracing the wide diversity that is U.S. agriculture today, and fighting for a U.S. farm economy facing its most difficult trials in decades.

Priority

America's Challenge

FOOD SAFETY



In 1996, as many as 5 million illnesses and 4,500 deaths in the United States annually were attributed to eating unsafe meat, poultry, and egg products.

HUNGER & NUTRITION



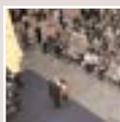
In the 1990's, about 10 million American children lived in households that were "food insecure," where family members either went hungry or gave up other basic needs, such as medical care, to put food on the table. From famine in Africa to the collapse of economies in Asia and Russia, the 1990's also saw mounting needs for emergency food aid.

RURAL AMERICA



Although it is difficult for urban and suburban Americans to comprehend that there are still families without clean, safe drinking water in their homes, in 1993, 3 million rural Americans had no running water in their homes. In addition, some 535 rural counties had stagnated in persistent poverty since 1960.

CIVIL RIGHTS



Like the country as a whole, USDA has a long and painful history of separate and unequal treatment of its female and minority customers and employees.

CONSERVATION & FORESTRY



In 1992, a total of 128 million acres of U.S. cropland were eroding at rates that would destroy the soil's future ability to produce food. Large livestock facilities threatened America's waterways and wetlands and other wildlife habitat were disappearing at alarming rates. Also, road development threatened roadless areas of the Nation's forests.

FARM ECONOMY



In the 1990's, more than 200,000 farms in America – mostly small family farms – disappeared. U.S. farm policy did not include an adequate safety net and neglected the majority of U.S. producers who were not farmers of traditional row crops. In addition, farmers and ranchers faced significant trade barriers in their efforts to expand their export opportunities.

Clinton Administration's Response

FOOD SAFETY



... In 1996, USDA launched a science-based inspection system for meat and poultry. In 1999, the Centers for Disease Control announced decreases of between 22% and 70% in foodborne illnesses caused by common pathogens on meat and poultry. This decline was attributed, in part, to the implementation of USDA's Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Systems.

HUNGER & NUTRITION



... Since 1993, USDA improved the nutritional value of school meals; launched nutrition education efforts in the schools; dramatically increased participation in the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children, and expanded afterschool, summer, and school breakfast programs to reach more low-income children. Internationally, in FY 1999, the Clinton Administration increased the level of U.S. humanitarian food assistance by nearly 200%—averting a mass famine in the Horn of Africa and aiding people in many countries, from Indonesia to Russia to war-torn Kosovo.

RURAL AMERICA



... In 1994, USDA launched President Clinton's Water 2000 Initiative. By 2000, USDA had invested more than \$3 billion in Water 2000 projects across the country. The project was ultimately expanded to also help rural residents with significant water quality or quantity problems. The historic investment provided clean, safe drinking water to 3.4 million residents.

CIVIL RIGHTS



... Farm loans to women and minorities were up 50% from 1997 to 1999; 99% of USDA's workforce has completed civil rights training. Department diversity is growing, even amid staff downsizing. USDA has taken nearly 100 disciplinary actions to uphold civil rights and the Justice Department has paid \$490 million so far to African-American farmers to resolve discrimination claims against USDA.

CONSERVATION & FORESTRY



... USDA now has an arsenal of strong conservation programs. They provide close to \$2 billion a year to farmers who want to pursue sustainable agriculture, protect air and water quality, and support wildlife habitat. These programs help prevent the annual loss of 1 billion tons of America's soil due to erosion. In addition, millions of acres of roadless areas in the national forests have been protected for future generations.

FARM ECONOMY



... The Department worked to restitch the farm safety net, making crop insurance more available and developing risk management tools that aid all of U.S. agriculture – from ranchers to row crops to niche crops. Thanks to a concerted effort, the number of small farms in America increased in 1999, reversing for the first time the long-term trend of declining numbers. From ratifying the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993 to normalizing trade relations with China in 1999, the Clinton Administration pursued an aggressive trade agenda that has delivered to America's farmers and ranchers the most open world agricultural markets in modern time.

Building a 21st Century Farm Policy

Agriculture is risk. It means getting up every day and doing hard work against the odds. At no time in our history have the odds seemed more stacked against America's farmers and ranchers. While 1996 saw record farm incomes and exports, the U.S. farm economy since has been caught in a downward spiral—due to record world food and fiber production, a series of natural disasters, and a new agriculture policy that left the farm safety net in tatters.

The Clinton Administration worked tirelessly to expand opportunities for U.S. agricultural producers and to stitch a new farm safety net that embraces the diversity of American agriculture today and works to expand opportunities – around the world and in new markets here at home. The Administration believed deeply in renewing the Nation's sacred compact with its farmers and worked tirelessly to see that productive and efficiently run farms and ranches were not lost due to forces beyond a producer's control – from powerful storms to weak markets.

The Administration also fought to get Congress to address the failure of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 to provide an adequate safety net. While supporting billions of dollars in emergency assistance, the Administration argued forcefully that a new farm policy must be built from the ground up to reduce the U.S. farm economy's annual dependence on billions of dollars in ad hoc disaster aid through aggressive expansion of market opportunities and innovative risk management strategies.

In 2000, the Administration distributed a record amount of emergency aid, carried out needed reforms to the crop insurance program, and made significant progress in leveling the playing field for U.S. agriculture in critical export markets. In addition, the years of concerted efforts to see more Federal resources reach small family farmers began to pay off – with news that the numbers of small farms in America increased, reversing for the first time the long-term decline. It was a strong year that capped off a strong record of progress in helping America's farmers and ranchers through a challenging time and laying the groundwork for a secure and prosperous future for the men and women who feed America and much of the world.



Record Aid to Farmers and Ranchers

USDA distributed a record \$28 billion in direct assistance to farmers and ranchers in 2000. This represented about half of total farm income. Without this aid, farm income would have hit its lowest level since 1984. Farmers coped with high worldwide production that continued to depress prices. Mother Nature also presented challenges, from drought in the South to floods in the Northern Plains to wild fires in the West. The aid included \$8 billion in loan deficiency payments and marketing assistance loan gains and \$11 billion for supplemental income assistance. USDA closed out the fiscal year by issuing nearly \$5.5 billion in emergency payments to almost 1.4 million farmers. About 97 percent of the emergency payments were issued in only 2 weeks. Secretary Glickman made clear that this aid was merely a stop-gap measure. "I remain concerned that the 1996 farm bill has left our farmers without an adequate safety net in tough times," Glickman said. "Emergency assistance, while helpful in the short-term, does not address the long-term, structural problems of the 1996 farm bill. Rather, the need for annual 'emergency' assistance underscores the failure of the 1996 farm bill."

The Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000

President Clinton signed into law a significant reform of the Nation's crop insurance system in June. The bill invests \$8.2 billion over 5 years to improve crop insurance, by making "buy-up" coverage more affordable and addressing the needs of producers who lost their crops several years in a row. The legislation also expands develop-

ment of new risk management products and improves the integrity of the crop insurance program. President Clinton signed the bill because it makes higher insurance coverage affordable and accessible to more U.S. producers and because it provides incentives for the development of new risk management products to help a wider range of farmers and ranchers effectively handle the risks inherent in agriculture. But this legislation also included the third multi-billion-dollar emergency assistance package to farmers in many years. As a result, President Clinton signed the bill with reservations because it failed to address the failings of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. "I would hope that the experience of the last 3 years has taught those who shape farm policy on Capitol Hill – as farm families across the country have learned first-hand the hard way – that we need to build a stronger, better farm safety net on which American producers, their families, and communities can depend," President Clinton said.

Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China

In preparation for its entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), China in 1999 signed several agreements to open its markets to more U.S. agricultural products, lifting longstanding bans on imports of wheat, meat, and citrus. China had banned imports of U.S. wheat for over 25 years for scientifically unjustified reasons. But in 2000, the United States sold 75,000 tons of wheat to China as a result of the agreements. Shipments of citrus began in March, and in April the first direct shipment of meat from the United States to China occurred. With





Secretary Glickman in China.



China's bid to join the WTO nearly complete, the prospects for growing trade with China seemed bright in 2000. But to realize those benefits in full, the Clinton Administration sought to permanently normalize trade relations with China. With a strong, bi-partisan effort led by the Administration and allies in Congress, the House of Representatives voted for permanent normal trade relation status for China in May and then the Senate voted for it in September. U.S. agricultural exports are expected to grow by \$2 billion per year as a result of this decision – once China joins the World Trade Organization by 2005 – providing a much-needed boost to struggling U.S. farmers and ranchers.

Progress on Small Farms

In 1998, Secretary Glickman appointed a National Commission on Small Farms to talk to farmers and ranchers, and experts in agriculture and economics across the country about the future of small farms and what government could do to make it brighter. Ever since, efforts have been underway throughout the Department to address the specific needs of small farming operations in every USDA program. In 2000, the Department carried on these efforts through a wide range of activities – from enhanced outreach to new marketing strategies, to efforts to ensure fair prices in the marketplace, to innovative research and extension strategies. The Department published a progress report in April that detailed progress in promoting small farms. But perhaps the best measure of this concerted effort is USDA data showing that in 1999, the number of small farms in America grew, reversing for the first time the long-term decline.

Dealing with Drought

After the toughest drought season in nearly a century, parts of 44 States were declared agricultural

disaster areas in 2000, making emergency low-interest loans available to tens of thousands of hard-hit farmers. Besides the damage to agriculture, water availability and local economics, drought preparedness took on a particular sense of urgency as devastating fires swept through Western States, spreading rapidly and proving difficult to control due to the arid conditions. In May, Secretary Glickman received the final report of the National Drought Policy Commission. The report recommended a new drought policy that takes the long view, favoring preparedness over insurance and offering incentives to producers and others to plan for droughts. The group also recommended greater coordination between Federal programs and other efforts. It is estimated that drought costs the United States more than \$6 billion a year. A substantial amount of this sum could be mitigated by a more pro-active approach.

Expanding Farm Storage

Realizing that farmers needed better market flexibility and greater relief from storage shortages, USDA this past year began making 7-year, low-cost loans to help build or upgrade commodity storage and handling facilities. By September 2000, USDA had approved 1,585 loans totaling \$46.9 million in 29 States. As a result, 244 new facilities were completed. These facilities will increase on-farm storage capacity by 31.2 million bushels – creating far more flexibility for farmers, so they are not forced to market when prices are low.

Boosting Bio-Energy

In October, Secretary Glickman announced a \$300-million bio-energy program to expand production of environmentally friendly fuels made from corn, soybeans, and other crops. The program, initially proposed in President Clinton's 2001 budget, will increase

markets for agricultural commodities and promote bio-fuels like ethanol and soy-based bio-diesel. The new program marks a major step in Federal efforts to meet President Clinton's goal of tripling the Nation's use of bio-based products and bio-energy by 2010. Under the program, USDA will make cash payments to bio-energy companies that increase their purchases of agricultural commodities in order to expand production of ethanol, bio-diesel, or other bio-fuels. The program will provide higher payments to small and new-to-market processors, including cooperatives, to encourage the expansion of domestic bio-energy production. USDA also began soliciting proposals for pilot projects that burn harvested vegetation to produce energy and took steps to develop a Bio-based Products List to guide Federal procurement officials wishing to purchase these products.

World Trade Organization Agriculture Negotiations

With one in three farm acres producing for world markets, a strong U.S. farm economy depends on strong U.S. exports. As a result, the Clinton Administration has worked hard to build a global marketplace that is more fair and market-oriented, providing U.S. producers with an all-important level playing field. The United States put forward an aggressive proposal for a new round of World Trade Organization talks that called for substantial reductions in tariffs, the elimination of export subsidies, and the simplification and reduction in disparities in domestic support. The proposal preserves the legitimate role for governments to invest in their agricultural and rural economies, but encourages them to do so in ways that do not distort trade. The Clinton Administration plan aims to build a more open, stable, and prosperous world agricultural trad-

ing system, one which offers more opportunity to American farm families, fairness for farmers in the developing world, and better prices and choice for consumers everywhere. The next phase of the negotiations is set for March 2001.

Reinventing Farm Loans

To make USDA's farm loan programs more efficient, the processing time for obtaining most loans was reduced from 6 weeks to 2 weeks, and the guaranteed lending application was reduced from six pages to one page. USDA also condensed its farm loan regulations by deleting 1,200 pages and reducing the number of required forms by half. The Certified Lender Program was expanded and made more flexible. At the same time, its application forms and paperwork requirements were reduced. Thanks to these efforts, struggling farmers and ranchers don't have to face yet another obstacle – in the form of government bureaucracy – when seeking financing for their operations.

Reaching Under-served Customers

USDA's sustained efforts to better serve socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers began to bear fruit in 2000, with the first numbers backing up the concerted outreach work of President Clinton. The 2000 data revealed that between 1995 and 1999, USDA's Farm Service Agency increased its lending to Native Americans by 175 percent. Overall, lending to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers was up 44 percent from 1998 to 1999 alone.



President Clinton joined Secretary Glickman in announcing a new program to promote environmentally friendly fuels.



A Less Hungry World, A Healthier Nation

As the world's most wealthy and agriculturally abundant Nation, the United States is uniquely positioned to lead the world war on hunger. Fulfilling this leadership responsibility was a high priority for the Clinton Administration. In 1996, Secretary Glickman led the U.S. delegation to the World Food Summit. There, the United States joined with countries around the world in agreeing to work together to reduce world hunger by half by 2015. The Administration also maintained a strong commitment to seeing the day when America could eradicate hunger here at home.



Secretary Glickman visits former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela.

While the 1990's were marked by an historic economic expansion, the Clinton Administration never lost sight of the fact that nearly 10 million Americans live in "food insecure" households, where families are forced to make impossible choices between medicine, meals, and other basic needs. Around the globe, one in five people is hungry, most of them children.

From a major new initiative to raise a generation of less hungry children around the world, to a dramatic escalation in U.S. humanitarian food donations, to efforts to boost grass-roots anti-hunger efforts across this country, the

Clinton Administration put the United States squarely out front in leading the world war on hunger in the year 2000. With its strong international efforts, this Administration has made clear that the Nation's commitment to fighting hunger does not stop at the water's edge. In particular, the Clinton Administration's prompt and massive use of food aid—to avert a famine in Africa and to aid hungry people around the world – will likely be one of President Clinton's greatest legacies.

This Administration also will be remembered for taking a strong stand in defense of the Nation's anti-hunger safety net. It also will leave a strong public health legacy, thanks to its work merging anti-hunger efforts with nutrition efforts to ensure public policy reflects the powerful ties scientists now know exist between healthy eating and healthy lives. From defending the importance of food stamps and school meals to creating a massive nutrition education effort in schools across America, to ensuring Federal nutrition assistance programs support a balanced diet, this Administration has made great strides to both fight hunger and improve public health.

Year 2000 accomplishments reflect this commitment as well. From forging a new partnership to create healthy school environments, to launching a new campaign to promote physical activity and combat the rising epidemic of childhood obesity, to carrying out an aggressive outreach campaign to ensure



food stamp benefits reach hungry families who need help, this Administration continued to build on its proud legacy of championing hunger and nutrition efforts across the Nation.

A Record Year For Humanitarian Food Aid

A largely untold story is of President Clinton's continued commitments to humanitarian food aid to countries in need—from North Korea to sub-Saharan Africa. In FY1999, USDA provided approximately 9.5 million metric tons of U.S. commodities for humanitarian purposes. This was nearly twice the previous year's donations, and the largest level of humanitarian food aid in at least 25 years. In 2000, the Administration carried on this proud tradition, donating nearly 2 million tons of U.S. wheat, corn, rice, and other commodities to Africa alone. These donations were nearly double the tonnage provided to Africa in the previous year. "These donations," Secretary Glickman said, "reflect the American tradition of sharing our abundance with the hungry, the displaced, and those who most desperately need our help around the world."

Averting Famine in the Horn of Africa

For millions of people around the world, President Clinton's strong commitment to humanitarian food donations has literally meant the difference between life and death. When 2 years of drought turned the normally lush and green African

savannah to a barren and dusty brown, 16 million Africans were put at risk. The Clinton Administration, through USDA programs, responded. Historically, the United States accounts for roughly one-third of the food aid needs of Africa. In 2000, U.S. contributions surged to more than 75 percent of the world's effort. According to the head of the United Nations (U.N.) World Food Program, the prompt and massive humanitarian response of the Clinton Administration helped avert a famine in the Horn of Africa. In July, Secretary Glickman led a U.S. delegation to Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa to learn more about hunger, infrastructure, and health care issues facing the continent. There, Secretary Glickman made clear the importance of strong international involvement. "I want to shine a spotlight on the desperate urgency of the development challenges in Africa," the Secretary said. "These countries are facing a wide array of catastrophic situations including AIDS, poor infrastructure, famine, and war. Without the help of the United States and other members of the international community, they have little short-term hope of overcoming these obstacles."



Secretary Glickman serves food to children at Mother Teresa's children's orphanage in Nigeria.



Global Food for Education Initiative

At the National Nutrition Summit in May, George McGovern, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Food Agencies, called on the United States to develop an international school feeding program to benefit children in the developing world. Two months later, President Clinton created the Global Food for Education Initiative to provide school meals to needy children around the world to improve their health and to encourage them to enroll and complete their education. USDA will work with the United Nations, private voluntary organizations, and others on this effort. In the first year, the United States will invest \$300 million to help feed as many as 11 million children. Speaking to African leaders in Washington, D.C., President Clinton shared his hopes for the program: "If our friends around the world will join us ... for about \$4 billion, we could provide a nutritious meal in school to every child in every developing country in the entire world."

school meals to the Women, Infants and Children supplemental food program. While lauding the historic advances of the past 30 years, Secretary Glickman warned against complacency amid a strong economy. "The challenge ahead," Glickman said, "is addressing the dual threats of persistent hunger and growing obesity in America – challenges with significant public health implications for the Nation." The Secretary highlighted the importance of community-based anti-hunger efforts, called for more effective communication of dietary information to the American people, and announced mandatory nutrition labeling for meat and poultry, so consumers have the same facts about these products as they have for processed foods. The Secretary also noted the need for stronger outreach efforts to see food stamps reach more people who need them. In 2000, 10 million low-income Americans who were eligible for food stamps did not receive them. Glickman also delved into the sensitive issue of dietary choices and announced the creation of a USDA Behavioral Nutrition Initiative to harness USDA's extensive research capabilities to explore how and why people make their food and exercise choices, and what USDA can do to encourage people to adopt healthier lifestyles.

The Great Nutrition Debate

Atkins or The Zone? No pasta or no pork? Americans are pulled every which way by the growing popularity of fad diets and nutrition gurus with best-selling books detailing the latest rage in diet regimens for "losing weight and feeling great." In February, USDA hosted a lively panel of popular diet authors and leading nutritionists to clear the air, explore some of the themes of popular diets and analyze their scientific basis. Given



Secretary Glickman at the Great Nutrition Debate.

A National Summit on Nutrition

In May, Secretary Glickman and Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala hosted a National Nutrition Summit in Washington, D.C. The event brought together scientists, policy makers, grass-roots anti-hunger activists, and others who care about reducing hunger and improving health through nutrition. In doing so, the summit harkened back to the historic 1969 White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health, which laid the groundwork for the Federal anti-hunger safety net from healthy



Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, former Kansas Senator Bob Dole, and former South Dakota Senator George McGovern join Secretary Glickman at the National Nutrition Summit.

that the body of scientific evidence supports a balanced diet and physical exercise, Glickman expressed concern that so many Americans were making food choices based on theories, myths, and inadequate research. If there was any consensus among the panel – which ranged from internist Dean Ornish, author of *Eat More, Weigh Less*, to cardiologist Robert Atkins, creator of the Atkins' diet, to biochemist Barry Sears, co-author of *The Zone* – it was the need for more answers. In response, Secretary Glickman directed USDA's Human Nutrition Research Centers to embark on a coordinated research program to examine the effects of popular weight-loss diets. The endeavor will summarize existing literature and study the health and nutrition effects of the most popular diets.

Eat Smart, Play Hard

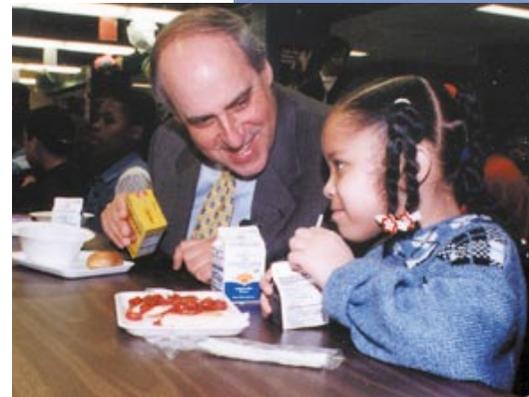
In July, Secretary Glickman launched the "Eat Smart, Play Hard" campaign – a national effort designed to convey science-based, behavior-focused motivational messages about healthy eating and physical activity to children and their caregivers. The messages are based on the healthy eating principles outlined in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the Food Guide Pyramid. The campaign's "spokes-character" is the great purple Power Panther, a cool cat that encourages kids to eat healthy and stay active. The campaign works to motivate school-aged children and their caregivers to make positive changes in their eating and exercise habits in order to improve their long-term health and reduce their risk of obesity and other diet-related diseases.

Encouraging Healthy Meals at School

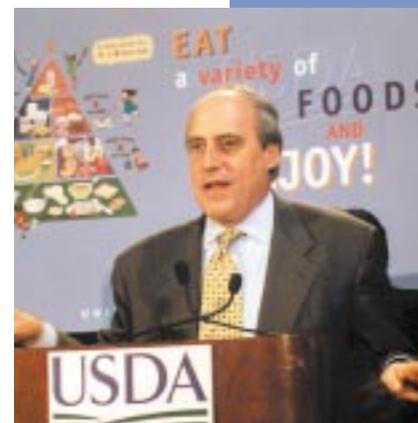
With new research indicating that students across the country are flunking when it comes to healthy eating habits, USDA formed multiple partnerships in 2000 to foster school environments that encourage healthy food choices. First, USDA and a coalition of five medical associations developed a *Prescription for Change: Ten Keys to Promote Healthy Eating in Schools*. This document covered concepts ranging from ensuring children have adequate time for their lunch break to encouraging schools to make decisions on what food they sell on campus based on its nutritional value, rather than its profit value. USDA also invited 17 national health and education organizations to get involved. These partners helped develop the *Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment* kit, which provides practical tips on how to create healthy school environments. This kit will be distributed to schools across the country. These efforts are especially important in light of recent scientific evidence that reveals that a mere 2 percent of America's youth regularly eat a balanced, healthy diet.

A Food Guide Pyramid for Kids

USDA's Food Guide Pyramid is one of the most recognizable icons in America. To engrain healthy eating habits at an early age, USDA in 2000 developed a Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children. Developed by USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, the "children's pyramid" was released in March by Secretary Glickman and Shirley Watkins, Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, at the National Capitol Children's Museum. The pyramid simplifies healthy eating messages and focuses on children's food prefer-



Secretary Glickman eats a school lunch and gets feedback from a student.



Secretary Glickman announces the first-ever Federal Government food guidelines for young children.





President Clinton and Secretary Glickman at the Capitol Area Foodbank in Washington, DC.

ences and nutritional requirements. In May, Secretary Glickman announced a partnership between USDA, 11 national food companies, and a parenting magazine to use the new pyramid to promote nutrition and health among youth. The pyramid was featured in national magazines and was promoted on a popular children's cereal box and on yogurt containers. In partnership with USDA, the American Academy of Pediatrics distributed a poster of the children's pyramid to 62,000 pediatricians nationwide.

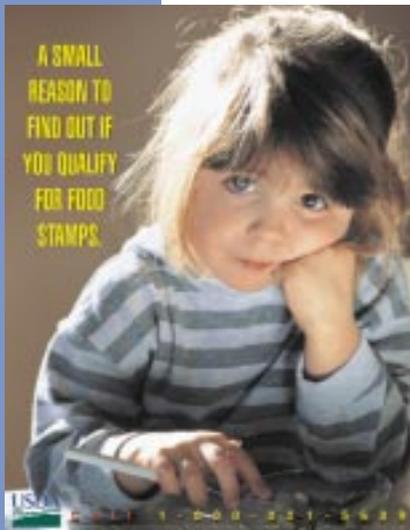
Promoting Grass-Roots Anti-Hunger Efforts

In the year and a half since it was launched, USDA's Community Food Security Initiative has achieved tremendous success in building innovative public/private partnerships to help reduce hunger across America. Without hiring a single Federal employee, the Initiative has: recovered more than 10 million pounds of wholesome, excess food for donation to hungry families; forged a partnership to use computer technology to better match companies donating food with non-profit organizations that feed the hungry; helped start a national program to convert school cafeterias into "community kitchens," which combine food rescue with job training; and produced a Community Food Security Resource Kit. In 1996, President Clinton directed USDA to lead a Federal effort to work with nonprofit anti-hunger groups to increase the recovery and gleaning of excess food for distribution to the hungry. In typical Clinton-Gore reinventing government fashion, USDA tackles this responsibility not by creating a new Federal bureaucracy, but by encouraging and

energizing grass-roots food recovery and gleaning efforts across the country. This approach recognizes the fact that neither the Federal Government nor communities can, on their own, solve the large and complex problem of hunger. For far too long, many government programs worked in isolation from communities. Likewise, community-led efforts frequently were disconnected from government resources. Thanks to this initiative, all parties who are committed to ending hunger in America are working more closely together.

Food Stamp Public Information Campaign

Participation in USDA's Food Stamp Program has declined nearly 40 percent over the past 6 years, while the number of people living in poverty has dropped only 20 percent. It is estimated that food stamps only reach about 60 percent of those who are eligible for this vital benefit that is a cornerstone of the Federal anti-hunger safety net. To ensure the program reaches all who are eligible and in need, USDA launched a national public information campaign in 2000. The campaign targets four key audiences: the general public, the elderly, working poor families, and households containing immigrants. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service produced brochures, posters, and flyers targeting each group. They also established a national toll-free hotline to provide information on food stamps. All of these efforts are offered in English and in Spanish.

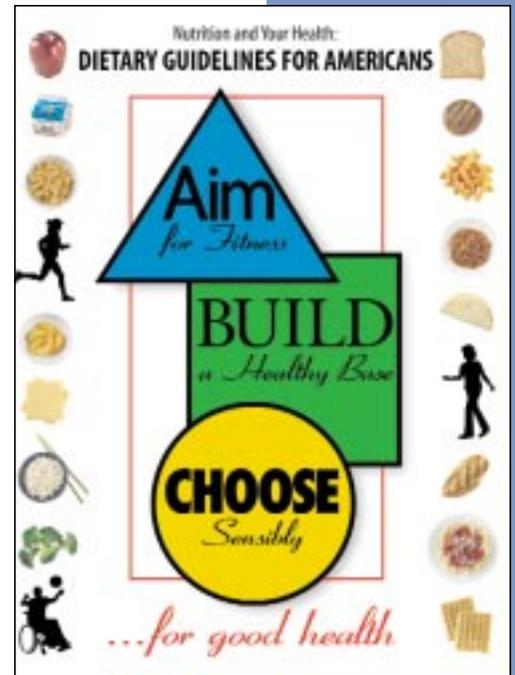


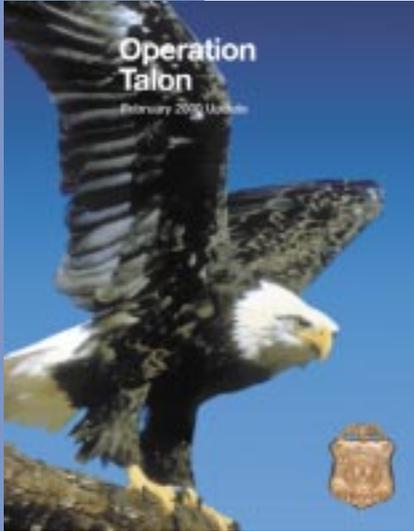
A Closer Look at Changing Dietary Behavior

Secretary Glickman announced a series of actions in November to help challenge all Americans to dramatically improve their eating habits. Glickman announced a new Behavioral Nutrition Research Initiative, bringing together USDA researchers, the academic community, and the private sector to explore America's food choices. The Secretary also announced that the Department would begin in the spring of 2001 a nutrition intervention pilot program in the Mississippi Delta to focus on improving diet-related health problems in the poorest region of the country. Glickman also unveiled a new Interactive Healthy Eating Index, an easy-to-use tool that allows consumers to analyze their own diets and get tailored feedback via the Internet.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The 5th edition of *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans* was released in May. The dietary guidelines, revised jointly every 5 years by USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provide the basis for Federal nutrition policy and for nutrition education activities across the country. The 2000 revision included for the first time a focus on food safety, placing particular emphasis on safe food preparation in the home. To expand awareness of the guidelines, a consumer-friendly brochure, *Using the Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, was released in September. This easy-to-read publication focuses on turning the guidelines into action by offering tips that consumers can use to improve their food choices.





Operation Talon Arrests Climb

Operation Talon was designed in 1996 by USDA's Office of Inspector General to apprehend fugitive felons, many of them violent offenders, who were running from the law, yet still attempting to receive food stamp benefits. As of September 30, Operation Talon delivered 6,733 fugitives to justice. Serious crimes perpetrated by those arrested included murder, child molestation, rape, kidnapping, assault, robbery, and drug dealing.

Operation "Kiddie Care" Guards Tax Dollars

The USDA Inspector General's nationwide effort to identify, remove, and prosecute unscrupulous sponsors from the Child and Adult Care Food Program continued its record of success in 2000. The office also worked closely with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to recommend needed regulatory and legislative changes to the program to prevent future abuse. As a result of this rigorous enforcement and oversight, 29 sponsors who received nearly \$53 million annually in taxpayer dollars were kicked out of the program, and 51 individuals pled guilty or were convicted of illegal activities.



Protecting Our Natural Resources and the Environment

America's strength is rooted in productive soil which protects us from famine, clean air and water that guard our health, and healthy forests that provide economic benefits as well as less tangible "commodities," from a silent hike among towering trees to a fishing expedition.

By protecting America's last vestiges of wildness and guarding the natural abundance and health of our environment, we protect our civilization—now and for generations to come. The growing national emphasis on sustainability is reflected in the evolution of USDA's conservation and forestry programs. These evolutions were fueled by the vision of a sustainable future that is one of the hallmarks of the Clinton-Gore Administration.

This vision has driven USDA in recent years to develop innovative, locally led partnerships that involve all stakeholders in protecting their environment and reaping sustainable economic benefits. The success of these endeavors can be seen from the forest communities of the Pacific Northwest where timber and environmental interests came together to the Chesapeake Bay where farmers and other local residents and government agencies are working together to improve the storied bay's health.

Thanks to the leadership of Secretary Glickman and President Clinton, the 1996 Farm Bill made an historic contribution to the environment by providing billions of dollars in financial incentives to farmers and ranchers who want to do right by the Nation's land, water, air and wildlife habitat. This leadership also has led to the permanent protection of the last untouched areas of our national forests – from pre-

serving the giant redwoods in the Sierra Nevada to guarding the pristine nature of the last remaining acres of national forest unscarred by man-made roads.

Safeguarding the productive capacity of America's natural resources and protecting and enhancing the Nation's environment are some of any Administration's most important responsibilities. Thanks to the work at USDA, President Clinton and Vice President Gore leave a legacy worthy of our children – a Nation that proved by example that it can have a strong economy and a productive agriculture without sacrificing the needs of future generations.

Taming Wildfires

The year 2000 was one of the worst fire seasons in recent history, as dozens of blazes in California, Colorado, Idaho, Arizona, and other Western States devoured millions of acres—claiming homes, wildlife, property, and lives. USDA firefighters were part of a massive 15,000-person effort to bring the wildfires under control. In September, USDA and the U.S. Department of the Interior jointly released a report prepared at President Clinton's request, *Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment*. The report recommends more than doubling the amount of resources committed to fire preparedness, fire suppression, and burned area restoration. The key points raised in the report were: the necessity of committing adequate resources, the need to restore landscapes and rebuild communities, the urgent need to invest in projects to reduce fire risk across the country, the value of working closely with local commu-



Secretary Glickman meets with firefighters.





Secretary Glickman and staff members visit the Tongass National Forest outside of Juneau, Alaska.



President Clinton announces his Roadless Initiative at George Washington National Forest in Virginia.

nities, and the need for greater accountability for translating these recommendations into reinvigorated efforts.

A Bigger Carrot for Farmer-Conservationists

In April, Secretary Glickman announced that landowners can receive more money for participation in the Conservation Reserve Program continuous sign-up, which protects environmentally sensitive land along streams, rivers, and wetlands. The new financial incentives – totaling up to \$350 million in the next 3 years – include signing bonuses and more money for installing and maintaining vital conservation practices. Unlike the regular Conservation Reserve Program, the continuous sign-up effort allows producers to enroll the most environmentally sensitive land at any time and without competing against other offers. The enhancements are one piece of the Clinton-Gore plan to strengthen the farm safety net. A major goal of the program also is to help reduce agricultural pollution into the Nation's waterways.

Conservation Buffer Initiative Nears Million Mile Mark

The Clinton Administration's effort to install conservation buffers across the country to protect the health of America's waterways involves nearly 100 partners, including State conservation agencies, conservation districts, agribusiness, and agricultural and environmental organizations. By 2000, landowners had installed nearly 1 million miles of conservation buffers, thanks in no small part to USDA technical assistance, cost-share programs, and other conservation programs that were reinvigorated by the Clinton Administration. These buffers dramatically improve soil, water, and air quality; enhance wildlife habitat; restore biodiversity; and create scenic landscapes.

Forest Service Moves to Protect Roadless Areas

In May, Secretary Glickman proposed banning new road construction on millions of acres of the last large expanses of pristine national forest left in the United States. By November, the USDA Forest Service had received 1.6 million comments from Americans interested in the proposal. At that time, the Forest Service presented Secretary Glickman with a plan to protect nearly 60 million acres of roadless areas – barring most road construction in these areas, as well as prohibiting timber harvesting except for defined stewardship purposes. "As we lose more and more open space to sprawl and development, Americans increasingly turn to our national forests to experience and enjoy our shared natural landscape," Glickman said. "Preventing road building in these areas is an essential step toward preserving and protecting these wildlands for the future."

President Clinton Creates Sequoia National Monument

No photograph or second-hand account can convey the magnificence of the giant sequoias. They must be seen to be believed. They are the largest living things on the face of the earth, some stretching 30 feet in diameter and climbing as high as the Statue of Liberty's torch. Only a handful of groves remain in the world – all of them are located on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. On April 15, 2000, President Clinton set aside 328,000 acres as a national monument that would ensure the permanent survival of these ancient giants, some of them more than 300 years old. While there are some existing protections for giant sequoias, no protection existed for the surrounding sub-watersheds on which the trees depend, or in areas where the risk of fire to sequoia

groves must be controlled. As a national monument, the USDA Forest Service will focus its efforts on preservation of the groves and their surrounding ecosystems.

Cherishing the Chesapeake

USDA added a new State to its growing partnership to use the Department's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to protect the Chesapeake Bay. Through this program, USDA pays farmers and other landowners to plant tree and grass buffers and restore wetlands along rivers and waterways. As a result of these efforts, nearly 60 percent of the bay's shoreline is now buffered, reducing runoff and improving water quality and wildlife habitat. USDA entered into a \$210-million 15-year partnership with Pennsylvania in 2000, adding the State to the growing list of States working to improve the Chesapeake Bay. The partnership taps the resources of the CREP to encourage landowners to establish buffers and other critical conservation practices on highly environmentally sensitive land along streams and rivers that feed the bay. In addition to enhancing water quality, this new vegetation also provides habitat for many species of wildlife. Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware already have CREP agreements in place to help preserve the bay. In the past year, USDA also awarded a \$1.3 million grant to establish the Potomac River Partnership, a public-private effort that joins the USDA Forest Service, Maryland, Virginia, and Ducks Unlimited to further enhance restoration efforts.

Protecting Farm and Forest Lands From Development

Over half of America's counties are concerned about the loss of farmland to expected growth, according to a recent General Accounting Office report. Another 61 percent express concern for loss of wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive lands. Well over 50 percent of the counties are concerned about unsightly commercial development, traffic congestion, and pollution as they plan for their community's future. In response to a charge from the White House Task Force on Livable Communities, USDA created a Policy Advisory Committee on Farmland Preservation and Land Use. The committee held listening sessions across the country and is preparing a report that assesses the economic, environmental, and social consequences of farm and forest lands lost to development and recommends ways Federal agencies can help communities protect farm and forest lands, reduce sprawl, and maintain the character of rural areas.



Bette Midler joins Secretary Glickman on a canoe ride on the Bronx River to promote water restoration.



Secretary Glickman joined late Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan to announce an \$85 million Federal-State partnership to protect Missouri's water and environment.



First Lady Hillary Clinton at USDA.

The Green Millennium

Working in partnership with the White House Millennium Council, USDA launched Millennium Green—an effort to encourage people across the Nation to plant or adopt a tree, establish a community garden, and/or care for a special natural resource treasure in honor of the new millennium and in an effort to create a healthier, more livable environment. The initiative has brought together a wide coalition of citizens, businesses, non-

profits, and government agencies. The goal is to plant 1 million trees, cultivate thousands of gardens, and recognize historic trees that have played a significant role in our country's past and that continue to thrive into our future. Participants are encouraged to share the bounty of their "millennium gardens" with community food kitchens and to practice sustainable agriculture. In December 1999, Mrs. Clinton joined Secretary Glickman for a tree planting ceremony at USDA headquarters. There, she said, "every time we plant a tree, we leave embedded in its roots the story of who we are as a people and as a Nation—and who we want to be."



Tree planting ceremony in front of USDA's Whitten Building includes: Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, Education Secretary Richard Riley, DC Mayor Tony Williams, Secretary Glickman, a student volunteer from Birney Elementary School, and First Lady Hillary Clinton.



Deputy Secretary Rominger at Millennium Green event.



Reviving the Rural American Dream

It always has been the core belief of this country that anyone who works hard and plays by the rules can build a bright future in this Nation. While this has never been more true than it is today in our cities and suburbs, too often the rural American dream remains just that – a dream.

Despite the tremendous progress and economic growth our Nation has enjoyed, more than 200 rural counties had poverty rates over 30 percent in 1990. Some 20 percent of Americans reside in rural communities. The Clinton Administration understands that for the Nation to thrive in a new century, it cannot leave one-fifth of its people behind. For this reason, USDA's rural development work under the leadership of two sons of rural America – President Clinton and Vice President Gore – focused on expanding job opportunities, improving the rural standard of living, and better serving persistent poverty areas. By focusing on not only building but diversifying rural economies, USDA also worked to stem the rising tide of out-migration that is draining young people – and with them, the future – from America's rural towns.

Under the Clinton-Gore Administration, USDA established Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities in the poorest rural areas. These efforts operate from the belief that communities, if given the proper support, can build for themselves a brighter future through a strategy tailored to their specific needs. With rising employment, new business creation, and improved quality of life in these areas, this vision of local economic leadership, supported by Federal programs, has proven an innovative and revolutionary success.

From seeing rural homeownership reach record levels to completing the connection of more than half a million people's homes to safe, running water for the first time, to bringing 21st century information opportunities to rural communities, this Administration's work in 2000 was a proud reflection of the energy, commitment, and innovative spirit that President Clinton and Vice President Gore brought to the White House 8 years ago. By working to see all of our communities have the chance to share in the country's economic growth, their leadership ensures that the future shines brighter for all Americans, thanks to expanded opportunities in rural America.

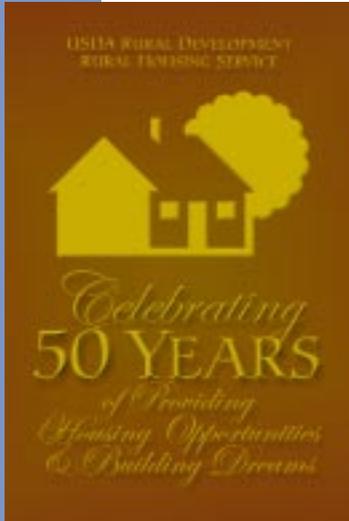
Rural Homeownership Reaches Record High

In June 2000, during National Homeownership Week, USDA announced that rural homeownership in the United States reached 75.4 percent – a new record high – in the prior year. These homeownership rates outpace overall national homeownership rates of 66.8 percent, and reflect a major goal of the Clinton Administration to see more Americans live their dream of home ownership. The positive numbers also are a shining symbol of the real-world benefits of the Nation's historic economic expansion. A key piece of this rural homeownership drive has been USDA's Rural Home Loan Partnership Initiative, which since 1996 has provided more than \$50 million to help 1,100 rural families attain the American dream of homeownership.



Vice President Gore, President Clinton, and Secretary Glickman at the National Rural Conference in Ames, Iowa.





Rural Empowerment Efforts Top \$1 Billion in Investments

In March 2000, Secretary Glickman announced that President Clinton and Vice President Gore's Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community initiative has brought more than \$1 billion in investments during the past 5 years to some of the Nation's most economically depressed rural areas. The initiative has empowered rural residents to draw up economic development programs that are tailored to the specific needs of their community. As a result of these efforts, nearly 11,000 rural jobs were created or saved; 854 new businesses expanded or were attracted to this initiative; nearly 12,000 individuals and businesses were assisted through business development and job-training efforts; and 513 new electric, gas, or water/drainage hook-ups were completed. The initial seed grants of only \$119 million in the 57 rural communities were multiplied more than eight times. Most of the rural areas assisted are concentrated in Appalachia, the South, and on Indian reservations. They had poverty rates of 25 to 35 percent when selected for the programs. Speaking in June at a White House Empowerment Conference in Columbus, Ohio, Secretary Glickman lauded the unique effort. "It combines the best of market-based solutions and government activism," he said. "Instead of leaving people exclusively at the mercy of the marketplace, and instead of creating a top-down government program for every problem, the Vice President has found a new way, where the government serves as a partner and catalyst to encourage locally led, private growth."

Water 2000 Reaches 380,000 More Rural Residents

In July 2000, USDA provided more than \$226 million to improve

drinking water and wastewater service in America's rural areas. These funds, a combination of grants and loans, will benefit 380,000 rural residents through 113 projects in 41 States. "It is simply unacceptable that at the start of the 21st century, there are Americans who have to haul their water from open wells and streams and boil it to make it safe to drink," Secretary Glickman said. The Clinton-Gore Administration launched the Water 2000 initiative in August 1994 to address the problem of inadequate drinking water quality and dependability in many rural areas. Approximately 2 million rural Americans have critical drinking water problems. This includes about 690,000 people with no running water at all in their homes, down significantly from an estimated 1.1 million people without water in 1990.

50th Anniversary of the Rural Telecommunications Program

USDA observed the 50th anniversary of USDA's rural telecommunications program by awarding almost \$13 million in distance learning and telemedicine grants to rural areas across the country. The distance learning funds will provide students in rural schools with the opportunity to take college preparatory classes taught by instructors located miles away. The telemedicine grants allow patients in rural clinics to be examined by medical specialists in distant locations. The event commemorated the historic legacy of the program, bringing telephone service to rural communities, as well as the Clinton Administration's emphasis on connecting rural communities with the opportunities of the Information Age. At the event, Glickman interacted on a live video link with students in the rural Towanda School District in northeastern Pennsylvania, where a distance learning program was launched in 1994 with the help of a USDA grant. The proj-



Under Secretary for Rural Development Jill Long-Thompson and Secretary Glickman help volunteers build a house on The National Mall to promote expanded home ownership through "sweat equity."

ect initially involved six rural schools. Now, it includes 300 schools in 7 States, as well as 20 museums and 16 colleges and universities. More than 25,000 students and 5,000 teachers now benefit from expanded learning opportunities, thanks to this program. Since the rural telecommunications program was established, \$11 billion in loans and grants have brought more than 1 million miles of phone lines and thousands of miles of fiber optic cable to rural areas.

USDA Electrifies Countryside

In a ceremony celebrating the 65th anniversary of the signing of the Rural Electrification Act, Secretary Dan Glickman awarded \$354.4 million in loans to help improve electrical service in rural areas. This put the annual total of loans at \$1 billion to provide new or improved electric service to more than 149,000 rural Americans. Nearly half of all electric lines in the United States were financed thanks to programs authorized by this Act. "Bringing modern electrical service to rural America was one of the Nation's most important achievements of the 20th century," Secretary Glickman said. "The challenge for the 21st century is to ensure that America's rural utility infrastructure keeps pace with increasing demand of rural power users."



Secretary Glickman speaks during a National Home Ownership Week event in Maryland.

Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Initiative Payoff \$1 billion Invested over 5 years

11,000	Rural jobs created or saved
12,000	Individual/businesses assisted
513	New electric, gas, water/drainage hookups

A New Era of Civil Rights

President Clinton brought with him to Washington a passionate commitment to encouraging racial healing in America. No Department presented a greater opportunity to turn those ideals into action than USDA. With its history of ill treatment of minority and female customers and employees, President Clinton's USDA faced the formidable challenge of not just healing the past, but building a future in which USDA could be a Federal leader on civil rights.

From the historic settlement that offered reparations to thousands of African-American farmers who lost their land to alleged discrimination to the wave of reforms that emanated from the hard work of Secretary Glickman's Civil Rights Action Team, USDA over the past 8 years has provided a model to other government agencies, to the corporate world, and to all who would take on the important task of changing the world by improving their little corner of the world.

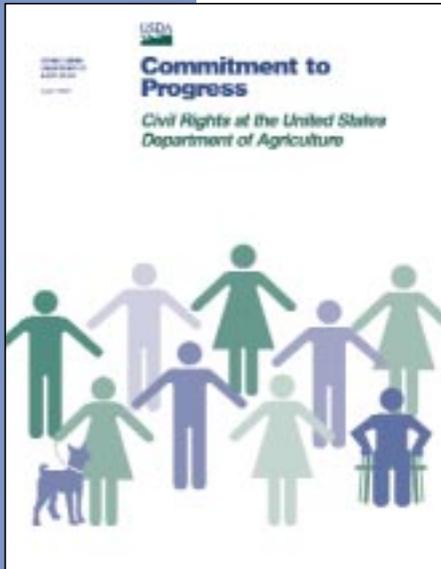
The accomplishments of the past year carry on the civil rights movement at USDA. From a new partnership to help preserve African-American farms to establishing diversity councils that offer greater representation to minority employees, to getting to the bottom of what's going on in areas of the Department with persistent civil rights problems, this Administration is working hard to institutionalize the progress of the past 8 years and leave to the future a true "people's department."

Civil Rights Progress Accelerates

Four years after launching a major civil rights initiative, USDA is making progress. Participation of minorities and women in farm programs has increased dramatically. All employees are receiving civil rights and diversity training. USDA's Office of Civil Rights has conducted reviews of proposed agency regulations to identify and address civil rights impacts on minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. Contracts with socially disadvantaged, minority, and women-owned firms have more than doubled. Most USDA agencies have undertaken rigorous equal employment opportunity compliance reviews. In addition, the Secretary has hired independent contractors to conduct accountability reviews of certain agencies and locations with a high volume of complaints and to report on the root causes. Lastly, the Department streamlined procedures to allow agencies to take quick disciplinary actions against employees who discriminate against or harass USDA customers or employees.

Preserving African-American Family Farms

The Secretary took an important step in healing the Department's past civil rights wrongs and protecting a vital part of the American farm heritage by supporting the creation of a foundation for the preservation of the African-American family farm. Plans call for the Village Foundation and its financial



Secretary Glickman speaks to USDA employees.

partner, the Rayne Bank of Canada, to have a board composed of African-American farmers. Creation of a \$250-million endowment will provide financial and technical assistance to help African-American farmers hold on to their family land. Formation of the foundation fulfills a key outreach and technical assistance commitment agreed to by USDA as part of the historic settlement of the class action lawsuit brought by African-American farmers after decades of alleged discrimination at the hands of USDA. African-American farms today are disappearing at a rate three times faster than farm losses overall.

New Diversity Councils Offer Perspective

In June, Secretary Glickman announced the formation of five employee advisory councils to help guide the Department's civil rights efforts. Adding to the already-established Hispanic Advisory Council and the Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities, the Secretary created councils for African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, women, and gays and lesbians. Two representatives from each council will serve on a diversity council that advises the Secretary on civil rights matters. These councils create a formal channel for each group of employees to provide advice to the Secretary, and for the Secretary to make decisions that take into account the perspectives of these groups.

More Jobs for People with Disabilities

"The unemployment rate for adults with disabilities is unacceptably high," President Clinton said in March. "We cannot afford to lose

any opportunities for this segment of our population." USDA responded by setting a new Department record in creating jobs for people with disabilities. In 1992, USDA acquired \$2 million in goods and services to accommodate employees with disabilities, resulting in no more than 30 full-time hires. By 2000, that total rose to more than \$27 million, resulting in 300 or more jobs. With new initiatives already in place, USDA should exceed \$30 million in 2001. As a result of these and other efforts, USDA developed an aggressive plan to hire 9,000 employees with disabilities over the next 5 years.

Hispanic Recruitment

In 2000, USDA developed a coordinated recruitment strategy to address the under-representation of Hispanics in the USDA workforce. The Department held two leadership summits to meet with national Hispanic organizations and forge partnerships in recruiting outstanding Hispanic candidates. As a result, Hispanic representation in USDA increased from 4.8 percent of the permanent workforce in 1999 to 5.44 percent of the permanent workforce in 2000.

Quick, Fair Conflict Prevention and Resolution

In its second year, USDA's Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center took significant steps to transform the Department's culture into one that places greater emphasis on prevention and early resolution of conflicts. As a result, alternative dispute resolution usage increased at USDA in 2000. To further emphasize the importance of this



Deputy Secretary Rominger speaks to Native Americans at the Pine Ridge Youth Wellness and Opportunity Center in South Dakota during a ground blessing ceremony.



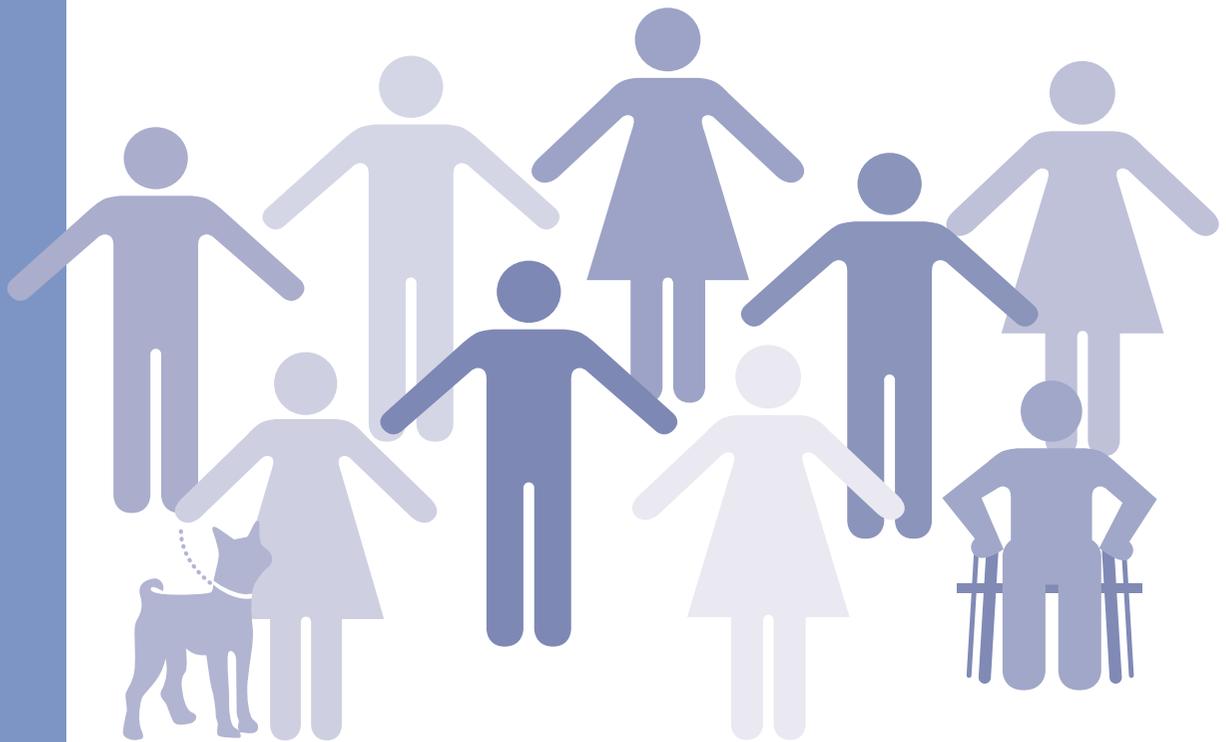
Secretary Glickman at one of the Civil Rights Listening Sessions.

approach, Secretary Glickman issued a comprehensive alternative dispute resolution policy, covering program and workplace disputes. The Center produced "A Better Way," an 18-minute video introduction to mediation. The Center also sponsored the first National Mediator Training Conference for more than 100 USDA employee mediators and began conflict management training for USDA managers.

Reaching Out to Small Businesses

USDA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization sponsored two studies to identify barriers that impact the Hispanic and Native American business communities' ability to successfully compete for contracts. As a result, the Office began an aggressive outreach campaign and has since counseled more than 1,000 small,

disadvantaged, and women-owned businesses. In March, USDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Small Business Administration to begin a Mentor Protégé Program, which will create opportunities for socially disadvantaged 8(a) firms to collaborate with large companies and acquire skills that will improve their ability to compete successfully for future contracts.



Safer Food for America's Families

A fundamental function of government is to protect people in ways they cannot protect themselves, like USDA protects families from the invisible pathogens that can exist in our food. While the United States has among the safest food in the world, the country has not advanced to the point where we can eliminate foodborne illness.

Shortly after President Clinton first took the oath of office, the Nation received a painful reminder of this reality when 4 children died and more than 700 were sickened by eating hamburgers contaminated with the now-infamous *E. coli* 0157:H7 pathogen. This tragedy galvanized the Nation around the Clinton Administration's efforts to overhaul a 100-year-old meat and poultry inspection system to reflect modern science-based methods. USDA's food marketing and food inspection duties were separated, and the Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety was created.

This effort delivered the single most important advance in food safety since President Theodore Roosevelt enacted the Nation's first meat inspection laws. By replacing a largely sight-touch-and-smell inspection system with a modern approach that uses scientific tests to detect invisible pathogens in our food, the Clinton Administration successfully shifted the focus of the Nation's inspections from merely detecting contamination after the fact to closing the safety gaps that cause it in the first place. According to data collected by USDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the result has been reduced foodborne illness and saved lives.

A crucial partner in the President's Council on Food Safety, USDA also works closely with other Federal, State, and local entities with food safety responsibilities to ensure one high safety standard for all food in this country. The Department, under President Clinton and Vice President Gore's leadership, also has been deeply committed to strong consumer education efforts that empower Americans with basic principles they can use to protect themselves and their families.

Progress in the year 2000 carries on this important work—ensuring industry meets a high bar for safety, arming consumers with information they can use to protect their health, continuing a strong commitment to using new technologies to improve food safety, and working across agency lines to make progress not just with meat and poultry, but also with egg safety. By improving the safety of the Nation's food, USDA has made a significant contribution to the quality of life of all Americans and countless people around the world who place their trust and faith in the U.S. Government to ensure the food we feed our families is safe.



Secretary Glickman, USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline supervisor Bessie Berry, and Vice President Gore demonstrate how to test grilled burgers for safety.

New Inspection System Reduces *Salmonella* in Meat and Poultry

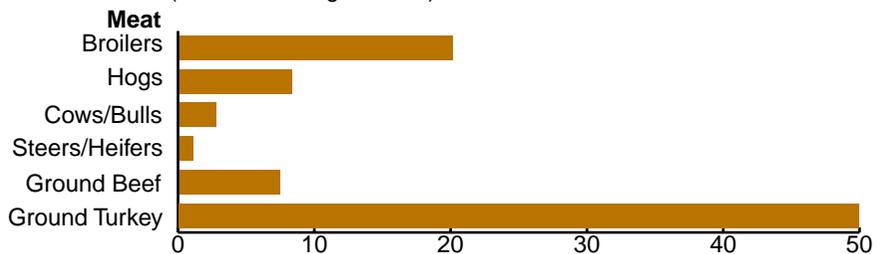
On September 20, 2000, Secretary Glickman reported continued reductions in the prevalence of *Salmonella* in raw meat and poultry products produced under USDA's new science-based inspection system. "The evidence is clear," Secretary Glickman said. "Our science-based, prevention-oriented food safety system is working. *Salmonella* is way down. Americans continue to enjoy the safest food in the world." USDA tests for *Salmonella* because it is a good indicator of overall sanitary conditions at a plant. *Salmonella* is also one of the leading causes of foodborne illness. The new data backed up 1999 findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which noted a marked decline in *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* infections, two of the most common causes of foodborne illness in the United States. CDC officials, too, credited USDA's Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point systems (HACCP) as a significant contributor to the reduced foodborne illness.

USDA Launches Food Thermometer Education Campaign

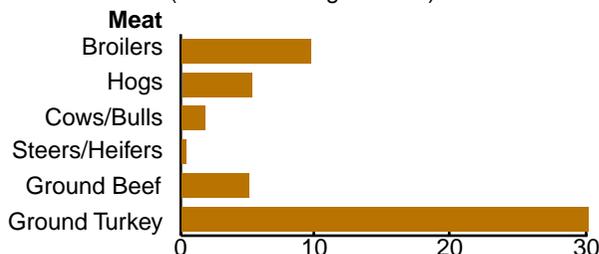
In May, USDA launched a national consumer education campaign to promote the use of food thermometers in kitchens and at backyard barbeques across the country. The campaign features a cartoon thermometer—"Thermy"—who proclaims, "it's safe to bite when the temperature's right." After USDA research negated the conventional wisdom that a brown burger guarantees a safe burger, the Department launched this campaign to emphasize that the best way to ensure food has reached a temperature high enough to destroy harmful bacteria is through the use of a food thermometer. According to the USDA research, one out of four hamburgers turns brown in the middle before it reaches a safe internal temperature. The new public education campaign includes a televised public service announcement and informational materials for consumers, educators, and health professionals. A number of grocery chains across the country also are spreading the word and helping take Thermy's message to families across the country.

Salmonella in Retreat

Before HACCP (Percent Testing Positive)



After HACCP (Percent Testing Positive)



Approval of Irradiation for Meat

On February 22, 2000, USDA began permitting the use of irradiation on raw meat products, such as ground beef and steaks, to reduce significantly or eliminate *E. coli* 0157:H7 and other hazardous microorganisms. This latest step builds on the Clinton Administration's commitment to use modern science-based methods to improve food safety. USDA approved irradiation for pork in 1986 and for raw, packaged poultry in 1992. Irradiation is currently the only known method to eliminate deadly *E. coli* 0157:H7 bacteria in raw meat. The technology also significantly reduces levels of *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, and *Campylobacter*, which also are leading causes of foodborne illness in the United States. Ensuring consumer choice, USDA requires irradiated meat and poultry products to be labeled accordingly. The use of irradiation for pathogen reduction has widespread support from groups such as: the World Health Organization, the American Dietetic Association, the Food Irradiation Coalition, the American Society of Microbiology, the American Medical Association, and the Institute of Food Technology.



Progress on Egg Safety

In a December 1999 radio address, President Clinton announced a comprehensive action plan to further improve the safety of eggs and reduce by 50 percent *Salmonella*-related illnesses in the United States by 2005. Under the new plan, egg producers and processors will put in place one of two strategies to improve egg safety. The first strategy requires rigorous on-farm agricultural and sanitation practices, extensive testing for *Salmonella Enteritidis* (SE), and diversion of eggs to pasteurization or cooking to kill the bacteria if it is found to be present. The second strategy requires implementation of new technologies to kill SE, such as in-shell pasteurization, at the packer stage of production. Three public meetings were held during 2000 to discuss and gather public comment on the action plan. The plan was developed jointly by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Americans consume an average of 234 eggs per person per year. Only an estimated 1 in 20,000 U.S. eggs contain these bacteria. But that translates into nearly 3.36 million eggs annually, which puts many people at risk. Final egg safety standards are expected to be in place by 2002.



Building a Healthy, Open, and Fair Farm Economy

Recognizing the difficult times facing the Nation's farmers and ranchers due to record global food and fiber production and a series of natural disasters, USDA was quick to look beyond traditional farm support programs for other ways to build additional economic opportunities for farmers and ranchers and to mitigate risks that drained the farm economy of billions of dollars each year.

Through strong marketing and regulatory programs, this Administration waged war on invasive species, developed the first national standards for organic agriculture, eradicated devastating livestock diseases, and promoted fair and open markets that benefit all Americans—from small farmers and ranchers to consumers who want to make choices at the grocery store. Many of these efforts were massive, years-long campaigns. Many, also, came to fruition in the year 2000, leaving as another Clinton-Gore legacy a more healthy, fair, and open U.S. agricultural sector that will benefit America's farmers and ranchers, as well as all of their customers, for years to come.

Strong Standards Benefit Farmers & Consumers of Organic Food

In December 2000, Secretary Glickman announced a final rule for uniform and consistent national standards for organic food. These standards are the result of the careful analysis of more than 275,000 comments USDA received in response to its initial 1997 organic proposal. As a result, it delivers precisely what organic farmers and consumers made clear they wanted most – the most comprehensive and strongest organic

standard in the world. Currently, organic food is certified by a patchwork of private and State organizations that each have their own standard. The USDA standards will ensure a high, consistent national definition for what can be marketed as "organic." These standards detail the methods, practices, and substances that can be used in producing and handling organic crops and livestock, as well as processed products. They also establish clear labeling criteria, so consumers know exactly what they are buying when they purchase organic food. By establishing national organic standards, the Clinton Administration is smoothing the way for even more growth in organic agriculture and furthering the development of another promising new market for America's farmers.

A New Advisory Committee on Biotechnology

Because of the extraordinary power and potential of biotechnology in agriculture and the many questions the public has about it, Secretary Glickman in February 2000 set up an Advisory Committee on Agricultural Biotechnology to provide input on the broad social, scientific, and economic issues pertaining to this field. The committee is made up of experts from academia, industry, public interest groups, and the Federal Government. This committee is the only government entity to provide a regular public forum for biotechnology issues. At its first meeting, Secretary Glickman sought committee input on a number of key themes related to biotechnology. The themes ranged from how to increase transparency in biotechnology regulation to how to responsibly address concerns regarding consolidation in



Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy and Secretary Glickman announce USDA's final rule on organic standards.

the biotechnology industry, to how best to achieve the greatest social benefit from USDA biotechnology investments. "Agricultural biotechnology will have a tremendous impact not only on our food choices, but in the way we produce our food, on our natural resources, on trade policy, and on other disciplines like medicine," Secretary Glickman told the committee.

"I wanted to tap a broad range of expertise. And, I wanted a group of people who would look beyond the science and explore the effects of this new discipline wherever it might be felt."

Strengthening Consumer Choice

As part of the Administration's efforts to improve consumer access to information on biotechnology, USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) in 2000 began establishing a laboratory in Kansas City, Missouri, that would evaluate testing procedures and accredit independent testing labs that meet high performance standards.

In addition, GIPSA will evaluate test kits against the manufacturer's performance specifications for determining the presence of biotechnology-derived grains in bulk grain to ensure that these tests are accurate and reliable.

Seeking Public Views on USDA's Role in the Biotechnology Marketplace

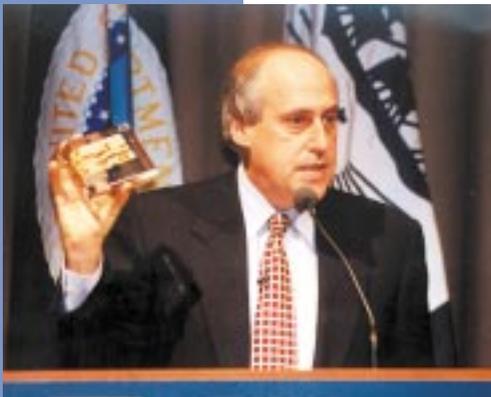
In November 2000, USDA also took the step of soliciting public comment from all interested parties on what, if any, additional steps USDA should take to facilitate the marketing of genetically modified crops. This was another example of USDA's commitment to an open and transparent approach to biotechnology policy because the Department went beyond its statutory obligation to solicit public comments on its proposals. Instead, it offered the public the chance to weigh in before regulations were even drafted.

Ensuring a Strong Regulatory System for Biotechnology

Along with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, USDA works to ensure that bio-engineered products—primarily new plants and plant products, many of which are engineered for herbicide tolerance, insect resistance, or disease resistance—will not harm agriculture, the environment, or human health. Since 1993, USDA has overseen the safe development, testing, and approval of more than 50 new genetically engineered products. To ensure the thoroughness of its scientific decision-making, USDA contracted with the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a thorough review of the agency's methodologies, identify any potential gaps, and recommend any needed changes to ensure a continued high review standard.



Secretary Glickman and President Clinton meet with farm co-op tomato growers in Arkansas.



Secretary Glickman holds an Asian long-horned beetle, which was first found infesting trees in New York in 1996.

Alien Invasion: The U.S. Tour

In March, Secretary Glickman embarked on a national tour to highlight the risks posed by invasive pests and diseases. Among the many stops, the Secretary visited a park in New York City where 31 trees were destroyed due to the Asian long-horned beetle. Glickman also stood with a lime farmer in Florida and watched while his grove was burned to kill citrus canker. Following the tour, the Secretary prepared a report on invasive species that forcefully recommended that the Federal Government invest additional resources to increase the protection of agricultural resources and native ecosystems from these devastating alien invaders. In the 1999-2000 period, Secretary Glickman declared no less than 11 invasive species emergencies and used his authority to release well over \$200 million in emergency funding.

Mandatory Livestock Price Reporting

In a move to help level the playing field for small livestock producers, Secretary Glickman in November announced that major livestock packers, processors, and importers would be required to report pricing details to USDA. This mandatory reporting system will provide all players in the livestock markets with more comprehensive information than was ever collected under the prior voluntary reporting system. Glickman, along with key agricultural leaders in Congress, believe that the new system will help ensure a more fair shake at market for small and medium-sized livestock operators. "We need to ensure that small farmers and ranchers have a full and fair opportunity to compete in an increasingly concentrated agricultural economy," said Glickman. "This new mandatory price reporting program will help

producers by making the market more transparent, giving them better information about what's happening in the marketplace."

Progress Against Pests and Disease

In 2000, thanks to the hard work of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and its many partners, bovine tuberculosis (TB) was eradicated from California and Pennsylvania, bringing the total number of States free from bovine TB to 47. To help rid the Nation of the few small pockets where bovine TB remains, USDA developed a comprehensive strategic bovine TB eradication plan. Also in 2000, a cooperative State-Federal effort successfully eradicated bovine brucellosis from Louisiana, raising the total number of States to 45 that are now brucellosis-free. USDA also helped halt the spread of plum pox—a serious disease of stone fruit never before found in the United States—after it was detected in Pennsylvania. A national survey in March 2000 found no sign of plum pox outside of Pennsylvania. Following a declaration of extraordinary emergency, USDA used a variety of measures to prevent the spread of the disease, including destroying infected and exposed stone fruit trees and paying compensation to growers. Other pest and disease programs dealt with pseudorabies, citrus canker, Medfly, Pierce's disease, rabies, and scrapie.

Federal Milk Marketing Order Reform

USDA started the new millennium by carrying out a much-needed reform of the 60-year-old Federal Milk Marketing Order System. On January 1, 2000, USDA consolidated the Nation's 33 milk marketing areas into 11. This move capped off a 3-year process, ordered by Congress, to wade into one of the most divisive issues in U.S. agriculture. Completion of this project was a significant accomplishment for USDA, especially in light of the complexity of the program and divisiveness and hardship that existed in the dairy industry. USDA demonstrated unprecedented initiative and leadership in proposing a more streamlined, efficient, and market-oriented program.

Bringing More Food Dollars to Small Farmers

Building on the success of 1998's farm-to-school pilot project involving the direct sale of produce from a Florida farm co-op to local school districts, USDA's Agricultural Mar-

keting Service in 2000 partnered with the University of Kentucky's Cooperative Extension Service, and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to conduct an outreach workshop on farm-to-school marketing issues for more than 180 school food service directors, farmers, extension service agents, agricultural marketing specialists, and officials in charge of school lunch procurement. As a result, several counties in Kentucky now purchase produce directly from local growers – cutting out the middleman and seeing more food dollars go directly into small farmers' pockets.

Advancing Animal Welfare

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in 2000 launched innovative enforcement techniques to uphold the Animal Welfare Act. These new efforts – which include allowing violators to contribute resources to improving animal health and welfare, rather than simply paying a civil fine – earned the program a Hammer Award from Vice President Gore for reinventing government. USDA also revised its strategic direction to focus greater attention on facilities needing the most oversight. In October, the Department's Animal Care Program was recognized by the American Humane Association for its efforts in confiscating suffering animals held in terrible conditions. USDA also successfully negotiated a partnership with the horse industry to address the contentious practice of horse soring.

Exploring New Scientific Frontiers



From day one this Administration has been deeply committed to pushing the frontiers of knowledge to expand opportunities for U.S. agriculture, improve human health, and offer up new ways for agriculture, the environment, and the economy to advance hand in hand. President Clinton and Vice President Gore understood full well the benefits of a strong U.S. agricultural research agenda, and a 1998 USDA report supported their strong belief. It found that from World War II through the 1990's, public investment in agricultural research was responsible for three-quarters of all growth in U.S. farm productivity. The report went on to say that consumers got a big return on their investment, as well, in the form of lower food costs and expanded choices.

The Clinton Administration understood the potential of science to improve human health, the U.S. economy and virtually every aspect of the American quality of life. In 2000, USDA research offered the world new insights into global warming and how the deadly pathogen *E. coli* spreads. Department scientists cracked the genetic code for cattle, poultry, and swine and discovered new allies in the war on breast cancer.

From improving food safety to expanding economic opportunities for farmers and ranchers, to finding new ways to help farmers produce a growing world's food in a sustainable way, this Administration's strong commitment to supporting innovative research helped open many new doors for U.S. agriculture and for all Americans who value safe, abundant, affordable food, healthy natural resources, and healthy lives.

Global Warming, More Sneezing

USDA researchers reported in mid-August the startling news that global warming's high carbon dioxide levels could be exacerbating ragweed allergies. In the studies, ragweed pollen production rose almost 400 percent with a doubling of the amount of carbon dioxide in the air. The study also found that high carbon dioxide levels may cause pollen production to start earlier in the year. That's bad news for allergy sufferers, and a troubling indicator of the ways in which high carbon dioxide levels impact America's health.

Battling Breast Cancer

In January 2000, a USDA-funded study revealed that whey and soy protein could help prevent breast cancer. In the study, approximately 50 percent fewer rats had mammary tumors when fed a diet containing a processed wheat protein compared with rats eating a standard diet. Whey protein is a minor protein found in milk. Soy protein prevented approximately 25 percent of mammary cancer in other rats in the study. In April, USDA scientists reported that cows either grazing pastures or fed diets containing vegetable oil produced five times more of a cancer-fighting compound in their milk than did cows fed conventional diets.

Battling Invasive Species

USDA intensified its ongoing efforts against invasive species, with a formal call to battle in February. One of the most feared of these invaders is a half-inch-long insect called the glassy-winged sharpshooter, which is spreading Pierce's disease and wreaking havoc on California's famous vine-



Asian Long-horned Beetle.

yards. To stop this devastating duo—the microbe and the insect—USDA’s Agricultural Research Service signed an agreement with Brazilian scientists to collaborate on breaking the genetic code of the microbe that causes Pierce’s disease. This would be a strong first step toward designing effective strategies to stop its spread. The Brazilians already have sequenced the genome of a similar strain that causes disease in citrus.

Another pest targeted in 2000 was the Asian long-horned beetle, first found infesting trees in New York in 1996. This beetle typically makes its way to the United States via solid wood packing material from China. It feeds on the interiors of trees, and if it spreads unchecked into U.S. urban and forest landscapes, it could cause billions of dollars in damage. The difficulty in tracking the beetle is that it often escapes detection, wreaking its damage behind the bark of seemingly healthy trees while landowners are unaware of the infestation. But in 2000, USDA scientists began working on a system to detect the hidden beetles – by identifying and honing in on their munching sounds.

Cracking Livestock’s Genetic Code

In April, a USDA scientist in Michigan helped deliver the latest breakthroughs on the map of the chicken genome. The map, which uses about 2,000 genetic markers to locate chicken genes, will provide the tools to breed chickens with both disease resistance and high productivity. Just 3 months later, USDA scientists in Beltsville, Maryland, reported impressive progress on the bovine genome map, detecting specific regions of cow DNA that harbor desirable genes, such as for certain milk proteins that improve cheese. Also in July 2000, USDA scientists in Clay

Center, Nebraska, announced that they had successfully deciphered 50,000 gene sequences in the cattle genome and more than 30,000 sequences in swine within the past year alone – generating a vast amount of new genetic information to be shared with researchers worldwide. This offers farmers and ranchers their best shot at being able to identify genetically superior animals for breeding.

Erasing *E. coli*

Human pathogens have been big news in recent years, especially *E. coli* O157:H7, which can prove fatal to the very young, the elderly or people whose immune systems are compromised. In March, USDA scientists revealed research showing that while the number of cattle entering processing plants while carrying *E. coli* O157:H7 was significantly higher than previously thought – as much as 28 percent – the measures taken at those plants to clean the carcasses reduced *E. coli* incidence to only 1.8 percent. USDA scientists also unveiled a new weapon in the fight against both *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella*. They developed a new laboratory test that rapidly detects the pathogens by pinpointing DNA specific to those bacteria. The new test is several hours faster than standard techniques – good news for the meat industry, which must meet the Clinton Administration’s zero tolerance standard for *E. coli* O157:H7 in meat. *E. coli*’s secrets were further revealed in March 2000 when USDA scientists successfully used a gene borrowed from a jellyfish to show how *E. coli* spreads. In nature, the jellyfish gene creates a bright green fluorescent protein. A USDA microbiologist inserted the gene into strains of *E. coli*, causing the *E. coli* to glow under ultraviolet light, making it easy to spy on the bacterium as it spreads across lettuce leaves that were experimentally contaminated in a laboratory.



Introducing the "Cuke-Melon"

In July, USDA scientists made botanical history with the first-ever cross of a cucumber with a melon, a breakthrough that could give both plants more genetic resistance against diseases and pests. The new "cuke-melon" cross will serve as a bridge for shuttling useful genes – especially those for disease resistance – between the two crops.

"Accidental" Antibiotic Discovery

USDA researchers discovered a new family of antibiotic compounds – not related to penicillin – with potent anti-microbial activity. In their search for natural compounds to control fungi in plants, the scientists isolated six compounds with some degree of antibiotic activity against bacteria of concern to agricultural and health professionals, including three compounds with excellent activity against *Staphylococcus* and *Streptococcus*, which cause staph infections and strep throat in humans.

Improving Delta Diets

In January 2000, USDA's Agricultural Research Service launched a major nutrition survey in the Mississippi Delta, contacting residents in 36 counties in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi to gather information for the "Foods of Our Delta Study 2000." The information gleaned in the survey will be used to help improve the nutritional status of residents of the Delta, where poverty, infant mortality, diabetes, and cancer rates are the highest in the Nation.

Dueling with Diabetes

In September, a USDA-funded study revealed that elderly Hispanics who have diabetes are more likely to lose muscle and the ability to move with ease and take care of basic needs, such as eating, dressing, and bathing. This information emphasized the need to educate the Hispanic community and health care providers about the serious consequences of diabetes and the need for dietary and lifestyle changes that can prevent the disease or lessen its impact.

Smiting Potato Blight

USDA researchers used cutting-edge DNA technology to learn more about an old enemy – *Phytophthora infestans* – the fungus that caused the Irish potato famine of the 1840's and still plagues potato farmers today. The researchers studied the DNA of more than five dozen potato and tomato lesions to find clues about the source of "potato late blight" epidemics. Using a high-tech method called polymerase chain reaction, the researchers made enough copies of fungal DNA to quickly identify specific pathogens – information that could someday give growers an early alert to the need for control measures before fungal diseases curtail their potato yields.

Delivering Value to Stakeholders

With its strong commitment to reinventing government so it "works better and costs less," the Clinton Administration worked diligently to produce a more lean, efficient, and effective Federal Government. From its dramatic reorganization of USDA around real-world missions, such as food safety, rural development, and farm services, to its downsizing and consolidating efforts that eliminated 23,000 positions from fiscal year 1993 to fiscal year 2000 at USDA alone, this Administration produced the smallest government since the Kennedy Administration. It also was successful in streamlining government programs, cutting red tape, and harnessing technology to improve efficiency and service, even as the number of USDA employees declined.

Reinventing the way a large government department does business may not sound as exciting as fighting hunger or promoting the farm economy. However, this work is just as important because these programs not only "make the trains run on time," but their quality also determines to what extent USDA is capable of achieving its full potential.

From leveraging technology to improve service and reduce costs, to improving the integrity of Department programs, USDA today is run more like a business and less like a bureaucracy – delivering greater value to its shareholders (the American people) and offering a shining example of reinvented government that can provide better service to the Nation.

Online Ethics Reporting Turns Off Paperwork

The Clinton Administration's reinvention efforts often involve reduced paperwork. Typically, the beneficiaries are customers and partners, but one key paperwork reduction breakthrough benefited Federal Government employees themselves. More than 250,000 Federal employees must annually divulge their financial assets, transactions, liabilities, and outside interests. The reporting and reviewing process is costly and paper-intensive for every Federal agency, primarily because those who file complete and submit the forms by hand. In 2000, the USDA Office of Ethics and the USDA National Finance Center pooled their talents to reinvent this process. They developed a web-based financial disclosure system that is secure and simple to use. By using existing hardware, and exploiting the power of the Internet, the effort required very little expenditure and created a very responsive system. The new system is hardware independent. It is accessible from anywhere in the world via the Internet. The information also is highly secure because it is stored on a tightly secured computer system, depends on employee passwords, and encrypts data during transmission. Best of all, USDA will share this breakthrough with other Federal employees. The U.S. Office of Government Ethics authorized other Federal departments to adopt this innovation.



Secretary Glickman, former Representative Vic Fazio, and Under Secretary Mike Dunn hear from a stakeholder during a town hall meeting in Davis, California.



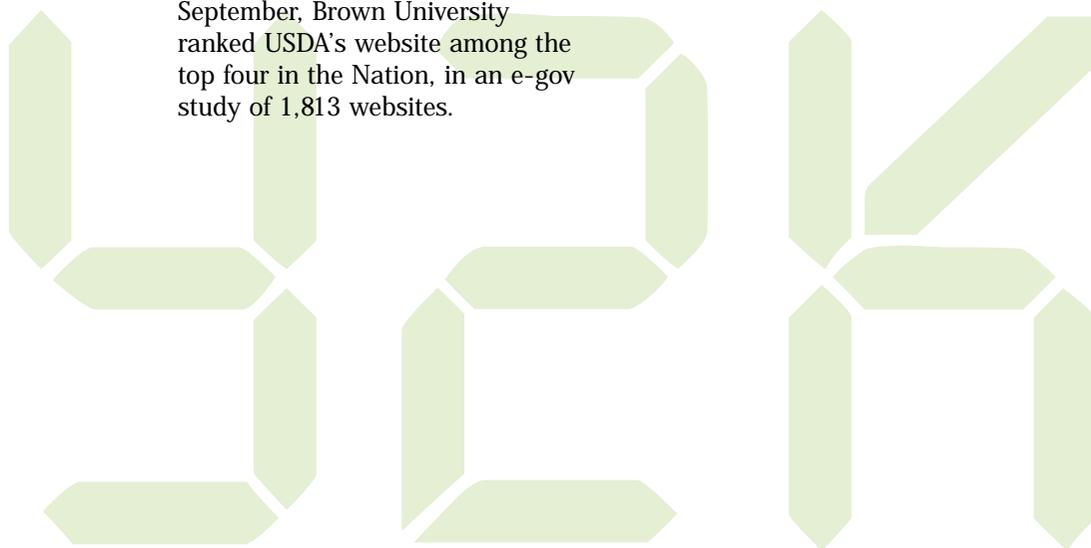
Secretary Glickman sees firsthand how technology can better serve constituents.

Setting the Standard for Government Websites

USDA is well aware that the Internet has become its most important tool for communicating with employees, customers, partners, and stakeholders across the country and around the world. As a result, in 2000, USDA's Office of Communications focused on not just improving USDA's Home Page, but making it one of the best in the Federal Government. The redesigned Home Page went online in January, featuring more links to make it easier for customers to access the information they need quickly. The new Home Page highlights breaking news, with links to reports and news releases. It also features audio and video clips, with live, real-time audio and video streaming capabilities that allow people to watch major news events as they happen over their computers. Still photos are available from field events, and orders for photos can be filled directly via the Web. The innovations came just in the nick of time. In November 2000, USDA's Home Page received 3 million "hits," compared to 150,000 for that same month just 1 year ago. The total number of hits for the year exceeded 90 million. But all of the effort was worth it. In September, Brown University ranked USDA's website among the top four in the Nation, in an e-gov study of 1,813 websites.

Y2K "A-Okay" at USDA

Ensuring that the Department's computer networks functioned properly in the new millennium represented a significant challenge. USDA also was charged with assessing the effects of the year 2000 calendar change on our Nation's food supply. In the end, the "Y2K bug" was more buzz than bite. The rollover proceeded with few problems and no impact on service delivery. USDA's preparation involved hundreds of senior executives, technology experts, program managers, and staff at headquarters and in the field. A key aspect of USDA's efforts was its leadership of the Food Supply Working Group, one of 36 groups formed by President Clinton to address various aspects of the Y2K challenge. The interagency group worked for more than 18 months to educate all industry parties about threats – ranging from terrorism to computer glitches—and potential safeguards. Only a few minor electronic disruptions were reported.



Hall of Heroes Honors Agriculture's Pioneers

USDA inaugurated its newly established Hall of Heroes in September by inducting four champions of American agriculture: George Washington Carver, one of the greatest agricultural researchers in U.S. history; Hugh Hammond Bennett, the father of soil conservation; Smokey Bear, the international symbol for forest fire prevention; and Senator Robert Dole, a long-time leader in children's food and nutrition legislation. The honorees are commemorated with plaques in the entry hall to the USDA headquarters building in Washington, DC. "By establishing the USDA Hall of Heroes, we are creating a means to forever acknowledge the contributions of distinguished pioneers of agriculture, past and present, for they should never be forgotten," Secretary Glickman said at the induction ceremony.

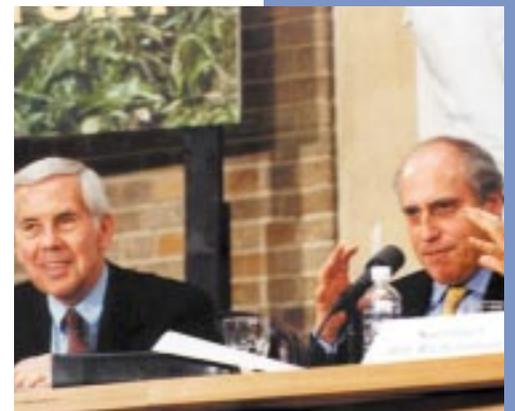
Expanding America's Promise

USDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with America's Promise - The Alliance for Youth, to promote career guidance and community service programs that help young people realize their full potential through USDA, 4-H clubs, and America's Promise community service activities. Under the agreement, signed by USDA Deputy Secretary Rich Rominger and General Colin Powell, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and current director of America's Promise,

USDA will encourage 4-H club members to work with adults and other local organizations to start a "Community of Promise" in their area. These efforts aim to provide mentors for young people, safe places and structured activities during non-school hours, healthy food, marketable skills, and opportunities for them to make a positive difference through community service.

USDA Leads Federal Use of Bio-diesel Fuel

On August 12, 1999, the President signed Executive Order 13134 to promote bio-based products and bio-energy. In support of these goals, Secretary Glickman announced that USDA would buy 20,000 gallons of B20 bio-diesel fuel for use in USDA's transportation fleet, making the Department the first Federal agency to commit to use of this alternative fuel. The importance of bio-diesel was further highlighted by President Clinton's Executive Order 13149, "Greening the Government Through Federal Fleet Efficiency," on April 21, 2000. In response to this directive, USDA doubled its original commitment, using 40,000 gallons of bio-diesel in the first year. The Department now routinely uses bio-diesel in an estimated 200 vehicles—reducing polluting emissions and increasing market demand for this new use for agricultural crops.



Senator Richard Luger and Secretary Glickman promote bio-based products and bio-energy.



Deputy Secretary Rominger and General Colin Powell, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sign agreement for "Community of Promise."

Epilogue

A final word is owed to the people who make USDA so important to the Nation. Dedicated men and women throughout USDA have shown a remarkable ability to adapt to change, to modernize with the times, and to respond to a variety of external forces. They saw the Federal Government go from record deficits to record surpluses. They made the transition to a workplace driven by the Internet and other information technologies. They saw the farm economy go from record highs to all-time lows. They also watched USDA's workforce shrink 18 percent – from almost 130,000 people to about 107,000 worldwide. Through it all, they were asked to do more, often with less, and they responded professionally and with great fortitude.

I leave this job in awe of the commitment and expertise of USDA's employees. This Department is blessed with countless unsung heroes who devote their lives to some of the most important issues facing our Nation. Every day in this job, they reminded me anew of the meaning of "public service."

I am proud of the legacy we built together. We helped farmers and ranchers cope with a severe downturn in prices and made conservation an integral part of U.S. farm policy, not just an afterthought. We worked to open up new markets, both domestic and foreign, for our farmers. We significantly increased food aid to needy people overseas. We made revolutionary changes to our meat and poultry inspection system, helping to significantly reduce the threat of foodborne illness. Our Forest Service refocused its efforts to manage the ecology of the Nation's forests and away from exclusively being a facilitator for cutting timber.

We fortified the Nation's nutrition safety net and added food recovery, gleaning and grass-roots anti-hunger partnerships to our

mission. We took major steps to promote good nutrition practices for all Americans. And, we invested \$62 billion in housing, economic development, improving water systems and other support for rural America. We took the lead in stimulating a public dialogue on biotechnology while working to assure a strong, science-based regulatory system. And, we laid the groundwork for the future – for a new, more responsive farm bill, in addressing concentration, in improving prospects for family farmers, in enhancing the nutritional health of all Americans, and in investing in research.

One of our highest priorities has been on the human side – to dramatically improve our civil rights record with our employees and customers. While the road has at times been rocky, I think we have been successful in our efforts.

But if I can leave USDA with one departing thought, it would be this: Continue our civil rights movement. If we treat each other as we would wish to be treated – if we live by the golden rule – then we will eliminate discrimination. Being a good and decent person, respectful of colleagues and customers, inspires others to do the same. Through our personal commitment to our fellow man and woman, we have the power to bring out the true promise of America and the values we all cherish.

I am proud to have led USDA for the past 6 years. On behalf of myself, Deputy Secretary Rominger and everyone who will be moving on, it has been a great honor to serve.





United States Department of Agriculture
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